

From: J. Thomson

June 20, 2022

To: City Council

RE: Public Engagement Update on Robert Bateman High School

The Direction was:

Direct that the City Manager report back on status of public consultation at the Corporate Services, Strategy, Risk and Accountability meeting of June 6, 2022, with a further detailed report and recommendations to Council at the Regular Meeting of Council on June 21, 2022

There is no detailed report with recommendations in the agenda.

Verbal reports to council might have been appropriate for the emergency situation that the Covid pandemic represented, but it appears this is becoming standard operating practice for this council and staff.

The Bateman High situation is not an emergency it has been in the works for about a year.

The lack of public information sessions where the public get to question staff is a blatant disregard of the Community Engagement Charter.

The public information session that was held was a travesty as the public was not allowed to directly question staff. The moderator interpreted the public's questions. There was no opportunity for follow up.

I was shocked by one staff member who responded that there was no need for a public engagement process as the council was unanimous in wanting to acquire the school. I would have liked to get his exact wording, but no recording of the zoom meeting ever came up on the website. I believe it was the same staffer who replied that real estate is always confidential. This after we just had the Aird and Berlis report that clearly explained that real estate may be treated as confidential but it is not required to be treated as confidential under the Municipal Act.

Another shocker was about the parking. If I heard correctly zoning changes are going to be required but that isn't going to be dealt with till next year. Shouldn't that be part of what the public is consulted about before the property is purchased?

In the Get Involved website questions were responded to, they didn't get answered.

Example:

Q: What is the plan for removing asbestos on the site?

A: Thank you for the question. The City and HDSB are both fully aware of presence of asbestos and this has been factored into the due diligence process by the City and is also addressed in the negotiations between the parties relative to the purchase price.

So basically, this is fake engagement to put a check mark on a to do list.

Regards

Jim Thomson